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Thanking America's Armed Forces

Active Duty U.S. Military Offered Free Entrance to All National Parks

JEWEL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT / WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK, SD –

To show our appreciation for those who serve in the U.S. Military, on Saturday, May 19 – Armed Forces Day – the National Park Service will begin issuing an annual pass offering free entrance to all 397 national parks for active duty military members and their dependents.

“Our nation was built on the passion, dedication, and sacrifices of others, and we are proud to recognize the brave men and women of the Armed Forces that protect our country’s freedom,” said Jewel Cave Superintendent Larry Johnson. “By offering the military pass, we hope that our active Armed Forces personnel will enjoy America’s most treasured and special places. Whether their visit is for relaxation, recreation, or education, a trip to America’s national parks will hopefully inspire some personal rejuvenation.”

Active military personnel and their dependents are able to obtain the new military pass at both Jewel Cave and Wind Cave. They must show a current, valid military identification card to obtain their pass. Furthermore, military personnel and their dependents are able to obtain the pass at any national park that charges an entrance fee. The closest parks that charge an entrance fee include Badlands National Park and Devils Tower National Monument. For a complete listing of national parks with entrance fees, visit www.nps.gov/findapark/feefreeparksbystate.

While the military pass is not available to veterans and retirees, many of these individuals are eligible for other discounted passes, such as the Senior Pass, granting lifetime access to U.S. citizens over 62 for \$10, and the Access Pass granting free lifetime access for permanently disabled U.S. citizens.


For more information on the pass program, please visit: <http://store.usgs.gov/pass/index.html>.

It is important to note that Jewel Cave National Monument will honor the military pass for its Discovery Tour. This tour is designed as a brief 20-30 minute introduction to the cave, and the ticket fees are like entrance fees and will be waived for those with military passes. Discovery Tours are made available year-round and are offered at various times throughout the day. However, the military pass will not satisfy the ticket fees for the Scenic, Historic Lantern, or Wild Caving Tours.

Over

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



“Because the military pass is not applicable for cave tours, and Wind Cave National Park does not charge an entrance fee, the pass can be picked up here and used in other National Park Service areas,” said Wind Cave Superintendent Vidal Davila. “As we celebrate Armed Forces Day, we offer our heartfelt appreciation to those that have sacrificed so much for our country.”

This military version of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass also permits free entrance to sites managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Forest Service. The pass is also available at these locations.

“Through the years, military members, especially those far from home in times of conflict, have found inspiration in America’s patriotic icons and majestic landscapes. Places like Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Statue of Liberty, Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, and Theodore Roosevelt National Park, which are cared for by the National Park Service and symbolize the nation that their sacrifices protect, are rich samples of many significant resources that encompass the stories of our great country,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “This new pass is a way to thank military members and their families for their service and their dedication to our country.”

National parks and the military have strong ties going back to the establishment of Yellowstone as the world’s first national park in 1872. The U.S. Cavalry watched over America’s national parks and did double duty, serving as the first park rangers until the National Park Service was created 44 years later. Jewel Cave National Monument was closed during WWII, yet one of its early explorers, Herb Conn, was in the Navy and learned his love for exploration and discovery through his military career.

For questions related to the new military pass, more information is available online at www.nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm. For information related to Jewel Cave National Monument, visit www.nps.gov/jeca or call 605-673-8300. Wind Cave National Park offers information at www.nps.gov/wica or by calling 605-745-1130.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 397 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.